

THE LOTUS LAMP

January 29, 1999

Volume 2, Issue 5

Vishna Gets Down To Business



The Vishna Age-Group students have branched out from their classroom pursuits to the world of business. Under the watchful eye of Mothura Marcia, they have taken on the task of coordinating the entire operation of "Hoagie Day" and "Pizza Day" on Wednesday and Friday. If the first week of their supervision is any indication, they clearly show some real business instincts. The orders for hoagies and pizza were up, and they have made arrangements with suppliers to deliver some of the necessary ingredients for the making of fresh hoagies right at Lotus.

The students will be doing their own version of market research by conducting a survey to determine how to better serve the students, and to get some feedback on their own performance. The training they are getting is invaluable, and they are making some money as a group besides.

Lotus' First Fashion Show Is Set

Have you noticed that at 5:00 pm, it is no longer dark? Do you realize what that means? Yes. Spring is coming, and with the advent of spring comes thoughts of spring fashions. We at Lotus are going to make it easy for you to indulge your fantasies of high fashion, color, and pizzazz! On Saturday, April 10th, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at the beautiful North American Motor Inn Ballroom, the Lotus Academy will present "Dressing Up And Dressing Down", an affair sure to titillate all of your senses. Good food, lively commentary, upbeat music, and the latest from the fashion scene will start your spring off on a high note. This event is one of many celebrating Lotus' twenty-fifth anniversary, and is one to be enjoyed by the entire family. Tickets will be on sale on February 15th. Mark your calendars! [Story by Mothura Maureen]



"The image sees...the image feels...The image acts...And if you want to change a situation, you have to change the image men have of themselves and their situation."
LERONE BENNET, JR.

Special Events Committee Update

Though the Oratorical Contest is not a new addition for Lotus' twenty-fifth anniversary celebration, it still is one of the true highlights of the school year. The Oratorical Contest finals will be held at LaSalle University on Sunday, February 28th, at 1:00 pm. This event represents months of hard work on the part of students, parents, and teachers, and showcases the wealth of talent, poise, and history that our young people possess.

The Program Book Committee is in the process of preparing a souvenir book for this event, and will be accepting ads from our parents and supporters until February 22nd. A full-page ad is fifty dollars, a half-page is thirty-five dollars, quarter-page is twenty dollars, and a "patron" ad is just two dollars. More specific information about the souvenir book will be sent out to parents this week.

The Capital Campaign Committee is preparing to mail out its solicitations for contributions and donations to our supporters, alumni, parents, and those businesses and agencies that can assist us in our academic ambitions. All money raised will be used for (1) classroom computers, student internet connections, and other technology, (2) funding for student scholarships, and (3) designated upgrades to our school building and the surrounding grounds.

In addition to the events already mentioned, there is a great deal of activity in preparation for the African-Centered Education Conference and the Educational Achievement Awards Banquet in May. The presenters, speakers, and guests for both of these events will be announced next month, along with a full description of the entire program. Tickets for both will also go on sale next month, as we expect that even with the large number of seats set up for the two events, the demand may very well exceed our seating capacity.

Lotus Re-Admission

Many of our parents have asked questions about the whole process of re-admission at the Lotus Academy. It is important that parents do understand both why and how we do it in order for the process to actually work.

The whole philosophy of the re-admission process is based upon the assumption that it makes sense for both our parents and the Lotus administration to decide at the end of each year whether the Lotus Academy is benefiting their particular child. If the parent feels that the benefits are worth the costs associated with Lotus, it is assumed that a re-admission application will be submitted. However, if the parent decides, for whatever reason, that their child and the Lotus Academy are not a good match, re-admission will not be a realistic consideration.

On the other hand, the Lotus administration must make a decision about every child for whom the parent applies for re-admission. The primary question to be answered is whether it is beneficial for the student and Lotus for him or her to continue to be a part of the program. This question is answered by evaluating the student in three categories. The first area that is evaluated is the student's academic performance and effort. Second, there is a very critical assessment of the student's classroom behavior or "character development". The final area of concern with the student is his or her attendance record as it relates to absences or chronic lateness. Every effort is made to look at these areas with an eye to figuring out solutions to problems that present themselves. However, there are and will be situations where the most considerate decision, on the part of the Lotus staff, is to deny re-admission to the student because of the severity of the problems encountered.

In addition to the above concerns, there is also a very important evaluation of the parent(s) making the re-admission application. They are evaluated on the basis of their fulfillment of the obligations created by the general fact that they are parents at the Lotus Academy, as well as the very specific obligations that are spelled out in the "Parent Partnership Agreement". It is no secret that the Lotus Academy has been able to succeed these many years in large part because we have had a number of parents who have made contributions far beyond paying tuition and attending their child's parent-teacher conference. Parents are also evaluated for re-admission purposes on the basis of their consistency and timeliness in meeting their financial obligations to the school.

Because our first commitment is to our present students, we must make these re-admission decisions *before* we can have any idea as to how many *new* students we can accept in any grade or classroom. An ambitious recruitment program is planned for this year, and we fully expect that we will get many more applicants for certain grades than we have space, as has been the case in the past. The only way that we can make fair and sensible new admission decisions is to be very clear about our entire re-admission situation.

Once a parent has submitted the re-admission application, the decision as to re-admission will be mailed out in mid-February. At that point, parents *must* pay the "initial payment" to reserve their child's place for the 1999-2000 school year, or keep up with the installment payment plan for that purpose. Any parents who have questions about this process should call the office.

All parents must complete and return the Re-Admission applications to the Lotus office by Monday, February 1st. It is our only way of reserving a place for our present students for the 1999-2000 school year.

News From The Lotus Age Groups

As we near the midpoint of the 1998-99 school year, our students continue to progress and to involve themselves in every aspect of the Lotus experience. There is so much to be done and so little time to do it all, but our students seem to be keeping up with everything.

Mothura Alva reports that Shaish Ia students are excited about science and math. In science, they have just completed a chapter about insects. The students used their creativity to draw ant colonies (you should stop by and check them out!). The math class has turned itself into "Mama Alva's Grocery Store" while they learn about counting and spending money. The students are able to purchase real snacks while using "pretend" money.

Mothura Lizz reports that her students in Shaish Ib will be joining their friends in Shaish Ia to pioneer a new and exciting activity—**ice skating**. Shaish Ib will also be having its 3rd monthly spelling bee on Wednesday, February 3rd. Last month in December, Quineshia Haynes placed third, Alisa Footes placed second, and Sloane Turner won the first-place prize.

Mothura Pam reports to us that on Tuesday, January 19, 1999, Shavi I took a trip to the Cheltenham Movie Theater. The students took an interesting ride on "SEPTA", and arrived to watch "The Prince Of Egypt". They were excited about the movie, and they were better able to follow the plot outline as a result of the teaching of both Mothura Terri and Mothuri Badara. Thanks to the both of them for making "our" history both interesting and rewarding. Shavi I would also like to thank Cheryl Preston (the mother of Caleb Preston) for accompanying the Shavi I students on this wonderful and educational adventure.

Mothura Maureen reports that the

Shava Age Group was very active during the month of December. They wrote and participated in a rousing play entitled "Different Strokes For Different Folks". For about one week, much of the class time was spent planning and writing lines, rehearsing (with a little fussing mixed in), and practicing the song which would be the grand finale of the whole production. The students performed splendidly. They memorized their lines, and, in the process, new actors were created. They plan to repeat this experience before the school year ends, and they are hopeful that the next presentation will be one that some of the parents and other students can attend.

Mothura Terri reports that in January she and Mothura Marcia took the Vishna students to the University of Pennsylvania Museum where they viewed the "Egyptian" collection. They marveled at the many artifacts that illustrated the rich history of this important region of Africa.

It was enlightening for Vishna to see the visual evidence of African history, dating back to 10,000 B.C. They were fascinated by such objects as "Egyptian" mummies, "skellas" (stones and slabs), and hieroglyphics, just to name a few.

This visit should also help Vishna students prepare for their upcoming Science Expo projects, as many of them are using the theme of "Ancient Egypt" to plan them. Also, Mothura Terri has been continuing this theme in Lotus Way (our own African History class) by teaching Vishna students about the world's first written language, "Medu Netcher" (commonly known by the Greek word, 'hieroglyphics'). All of the students had great fun writing their names and other words in the sacred language of 'hieroglyphics'.

Year-Round Education

The calendar for the 1999-2000 school year has already been distributed to all of our parents, and it confirms what was stated at *both* of the meetings with the parents: that as much as the Lotus teaching staff and administration would like to begin our version of "year-round education" next year, there are some real obstacles that we must contend with before it is advantageous to do so.

The single most difficult problem is *transportation*. Our preliminary contact with the School District of Philadelphia Transportation Services (which provides us with the "yellow buses") indicates that they are reluctant to provide bus service during the months of July and August. However, there are some potential avenues for resolving this matter with them in our favor, in addition to the possibility of devising solutions of our own with regard to transportation.

One of the tasks that we will tackle as we look to the school year which begins in September of 2000 is finalizing and detailing our curriculum outline for our "year-round education" model. This comprehensive outline (which will be available to our parents in December, 1999) will spell out our entire African-Centered curriculum philosophy and program, as well as specifying those "additional" areas that it will be possible to include because of the increase in the number of school days.

A Curriculum Committee made up of administrators, teachers, and parents is presently being organized in order to facilitate the preparation of this critical curriculum outline. This committee will also make specific curriculum proposals for the 1999-2000 school year, though they will not involve any "year-round education" considerations. The first meeting of the committee is scheduled for February, 1999. Parents will be kept informed as to these new developments.

Lotus Academy Teacher Of The Month

Mothura Maureen is our Teacher of the Month for this issue. As is the case with so many others, her contributions go far beyond her classroom. Her special talent for creative writing, desktop publishing, and organization make her a valued Lotus team member.



She is presently coordinating the Fashion Show (along with parents Julie Wilcher and Janice Fullard), heading up our Recruitment Drive for new students, and supervising the production of the program books for our special events. All in all, it is obvious why she is one of our favorites.

Early Learning Center Has First Open House

The Lotus Academy Early Learning Center is open and operational in its splendid new building located at Wissahickon Ave. and Walnut Lane. At the open house on January 13th, many of the Lotus family attended the opening ceremony. Visiting with the Mothuras and Mothuris, all the Marunas and Marunis were happy to reconnect with their fellow younger Lotus students. The Lotus Singers performed well and entertained us. Thanks to all the parents for keeping your promise to visit the ELC. Many, many thanks to Mothuri Hank Jackson who sacrificed his Kwanzaa holidays, working night and day to turn our building into a virtual “palace” for the “babies” of the family.

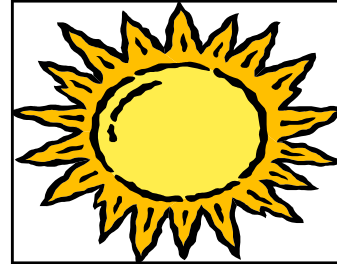


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[Story by Mothuri Badara]

Monthly Reminders

Early Learning Center



Tue, Feb. 2 – Teachers’ Planning Session (ELC OPEN)
Mon, Feb. 15 – SCHOOL CLOSED
Sunday, Feb. 28 – 1pm – ORATORICAL CONTEST

Lower & Upper Schools (Grades 1 to 8)



Mon, Feb. 1 – Deadline~Re-Admission Application
Tue, Feb. 2 – Staff Meeting - NOON DISMISSAL
Wed, Feb. 10 – Lower School Oratorical Prelim’s
Thu, Feb. 11 – Upper School Oratorical Prelim’s
Mon, Feb. 15 – SCHOOL CLOSED
Sunday, Feb. 28 – 1 pm – ORATORICAL CONTEST

“we the Black people are the people of life & death is not a weapon that can be used to stop our life-movements ever again”

HAKI R. MADHUBUTI